
From: HJR153
Sent: Tuesday, September 14, 2004 8:03 PM
To: HJR153
Subject: HJR153 - Darryl Kerkeslager

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Utility Type: electric
Company Name: Dominion Virginia Power
Comments: The benefits of placing lines underground include:

1. Reliable power, even in emergencies. Keep in mind all the uses of power, especailly in rural areas, where it is used to pump wells for fresh water, as well as heat homes and refrigerate food. For some elderly, reliable power delivery can mean life.
2. Reliable power is vital to businesses. Each time power is lost for a day or more, businesses take an economic hit.
3. Repair of lines costs Dominion Virginia Power and Electric Cooperatives millions of dollars for tree trimming costs, bucket trucks, emergency repairs, and emergency overtime. While it is obvious that burying lines will be even more expensive in the short time, the government, and the utilities, have a particular responsibility to think long term.
4. The risk associated with overhead power lines is greater than with buried lines, if the matter is approached correctly. While buried power lines may be dug up, thoughtful placement, physical protection barriers, and the Miss Utility program can minimize the events of contact. No amount of precaution, even tree trimming, can do much to prevent the forces of high wind, and freezing rain.
5. The safety of line workers would be somewhat increased.
6. The esthetics and environmental benefits should not be ignored.
7. Let us not forget terrorism.

The negatives include:

1. The cost in the short term of burying the lines.
2. The difficulty of regular maintenance. This could be minimized threw careful planning, and the use of highway shoulders for easy access to line

NOTE: Bury main lines under highway shoulders, where trucks have access, yet do not disrupt traffic, and the lines can be dug up as necessary without much disruption. The risk of lines being accidentally dug up is also minimized.

Criteria for determining whether certain overhead lines are eligible for being relocated underground:

Just one: Evaluate each section of line by how many people that it effects, in terms of employment and homes. Start with the highest effect, and continue burying lines until the cost/return becomes prohibitive.

Potential options for funding:

Everyone benefits. Everyone pays. The power companies cannot fund this on their own, nor should they. The benefits of cooperation between the state and the utilities would be enormous. We have long recognized that utilities are close indeed to public entities, and have granted them special priveleges (eminent domain) and responsibilities (rate justification). By combining road right-of-ways with utility right-of-ways, and narrowing the size of the combined right-of-way, everyone benefits. This is also an oppurtunity to enhance services, to move the newly laid lines into the 21st century, by making use of the latest technology.

Along the same lines, the next question is easily answered: this is a state matter. Water lines may start from a local reservoir and go to homes in one locality; sewage may flow from a locality's homes to one local sewage plant, but power flows from many sources in the state, to many places. Further, the state's power to tax is vital to the success of this initiative.